

Mr. Jeff Koenings  
Director  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

May 13, 2002

Dear Mr. Koenings,

Yesterday I picked up a copy of the new fishing regulations. I was struck by the photograph on the cover: three men fishing in a small boat. The day was sunny, a fish being netted – but not one of the fishermen was wearing a life jacket.

You have several full-page ads inside the pamphlet advocating the wearing of PFDs, but the picture on the cover seems to be sending the opposite message. I am the Squadron Education Officer for the Olympia Sail and Power Squadron, and I spend much of my time combatting the conventional wisdom among boaters that PFDs can be kept stowed under the seat or below in a locker, to be put on if an emergency arises.

A majority of boating fatalities are fishers/hunters in small boats. Of these fatalities, almost 75% had PFDs in their boat, but they were thrown into the water unexpectedly, without time to don a life jacket.

Your fishing pamphlet is helpful, well organized, and contains much necessary information for sportsmen. The photographs, especially the cover, also send a message: good weather and good fishing. Safe boating could be part of that message if the fishermen were wearing life jackets. Please consider trying to find a photograph for next year's issue that reflects water safety as well as good fishing.

Sincerely,



Roberta D. Scott  
SEO, Olympia Sail and Power Squadron  
The United States Power Squadrons

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR